

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20510

December 11, 2017

1057

The Honorable Ajit Pai
Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, D.C. 20554

Dear Chairman Pai:

We write to urge you to abandon your ill-conceived and rash plan to dismantle the strong and robust net neutrality rules that have fueled the growth of our \$1 trillion internet economy. The internet economy is now over 7% of US GDP and employs almost 7 million people.¹

Moreover, the internet economy has grown faster than any other sector in the U.S., having boosted employment while many other industries in the U.S. were shedding jobs in the last economic downturn. It is undisputed that our strong, robust open internet drove this tremendous economic growth.

The mission of the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is to promote the use and deployment of communications in the public interest, and the job of the FCC Chairman is to make sure that mission is being carried out. Undoing the existing strong net neutrality rules will harm our economy and is the **exact opposite** of the FCC's mission to protect the public interest and promote access to networks.

Weakening the internet economy will be particularly harmful to the economy of Washington state. The internet economy is responsible for 13% of Washington state's economic output. A quarter of a million jobs in Washington state depend on the continued good health and vibrancy of our internet economy.²

The "App Economy," which consists of everybody who makes money and has a job thanks to mobile apps powered by an open internet, is another example of the power of the internet economy made possible by the existing net neutrality rules. Today, 1.7 million Americans have jobs because of the App Economy. Nearly 92,000 of those jobs are in Washington state.³

The FCC's proper stewardship of our communications networks is more important than ever for continued job growth stemming from the booming internet economy.

On behalf of all Washingtonians and the consumers and innovators who rely on toll free access to a free and open internet, we strongly urge you to make the right decision and stand up for the consumers you committed to protect when you took your oath of office.

Sincerely,

¹ <http://www.cyberstates.org/>

² *Id* at page 62.

³ https://actonline.org/wp-content/uploads/App_Economy_Report_2017_Digital.pdf



Maria Cantwell
United States Senator



Suzan K. DelBene
Member of Congress



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 26, 2018

The Honorable Maria Cantwell
United States Senate
511 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cantwell:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which reestablished the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers while returning to the light-touch legal framework that governed such practices for almost twenty years.

At the dawn of the commercial Internet in 1996, President Clinton and a Republican Congress agreed that it would be the policy of the United States “to preserve the vibrant and competitive free market that presently exists for the Internet . . . unfettered by Federal or State regulation.” This bipartisan policy worked. Encouraged by light-touch regulation, the private sector invested over \$1.5 trillion to build fixed and mobile networks throughout the United States. Innovators and entrepreneurs grew startups into global giants. America’s Internet economy became the envy of the world.

Then, in early 2015, the FCC jettisoned this successful, bipartisan approach to the Internet and decided to subject the Internet to utility-style regulation designed in the 1930s to govern Ma Bell. This decision was a mistake. For one thing, there was no problem to solve. The Internet wasn’t broken in 2015. We weren’t living in a digital dystopia. To the contrary, the Internet had been a stunning success.

Not only was there no problem, this “solution” hasn’t worked. The main complaint consumers have about the Internet is not and has never been that their Internet service provider is blocking access to content. It’s that they don’t have access at all or enough competition between providers. The 2015 regulations have taken us in the opposite direction from these consumer preferences. Under Title II, annual investment in high-speed networks declined by billions of dollars—the first time that such investment has gone down outside of a recession in the Internet era. And our recent Broadband Deployment Report shows that the pace of both fixed and mobile broadband deployment declined dramatically in the two years following the *Title II Order*.

Returning to the legal framework that governed the Internet from President Clinton’s pronouncement in 1996 until 2015 is not going to destroy the Internet. It is not going to end the Internet as we know it. It is not going to undermine the free exchange of ideas or the fundamental truth that the Internet is the greatest free market success story of our lifetimes.

By returning to the light-touch Title I framework, we are helping consumers and promoting competition. Broadband providers will have stronger incentives to build networks, especially in unserved areas, and to upgrade networks to gigabit speeds and 5G. This means there will be more competition among broadband providers. It also means more ways that companies of all kinds and sizes can deliver applications and content to more users. In short, it's a freer and more open Internet.

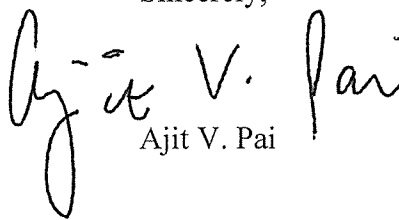
The *Restoring Internet Freedom Order* also promotes more robust transparency among ISPs than existed three years ago. It requires ISPs to disclose a variety of business practices, and the failure to do so subjects them to enforcement action. This transparency rule will ensure that consumers know what they're buying and that startups get information they need as they develop new products and services.

Moreover, we reestablish the Federal Trade Commission's authority to ensure that consumers and competition are protected. Two years ago, the *Title II Order* stripped the FTC of its jurisdiction over broadband providers by deeming them all Title II "common carriers." But now we are putting our nation's premier consumer protection cop back on the beat.

In sum, Americans will still be able to access the websites they want to visit. They will still be able to enjoy the services they want to enjoy. There will still be regulation and regulators guarding a free and open Internet. This is the way things were prior to 2015, and this is the way they will be in the future.

I appreciate your interest in this matter. Your views are important and will be entered into the record of the proceeding. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Ajit V. Pai



FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

April 26, 2018

The Honorable Suzan DelBene
U.S. House of Representatives
2442 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congresswoman DelBene:

Thank you for your letter regarding the *Restoring Internet Freedom Order*, which reestablished the authority of the Federal Trade Commission to oversee the network management practices of Internet service providers while returning to the light-touch legal framework that governed such practices for almost twenty years.

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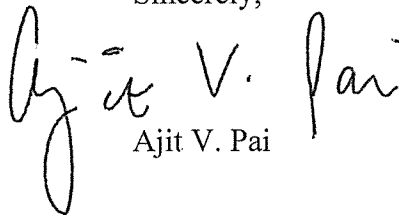
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Ajit V. Pai